DECISIONS BY GENRE

The Broadcasting Standards Authority’s 0800 Number
The Broadcasting Standards Authority’s 0800 number is 0800 366 996. It has a recorded message which explains the complaints process.

DECISIONS BY GENRE (RADIO)

Of the 214 decisions issued in the year ended 30 June 2005, half were about the journalistic standards of balance, fairness and accuracy. By contrast, a relatively small number of complaints, 10%, alleged a breach of good taste and decency. Privacy complaints more than doubled from the previous year, up from 8 to 18 (in number). There was a small increase in alleged breaches of children’s interests.

Complaints are most commonly received about factual programming which correlates to the higher proportion of complaints received citing the balance, fairness and accuracy standards.

DECISIONS BY GENRE (TV)

TVNZ 28
CanWest TVWorks 13
The Radio Network 6
Radio NZ 6
CanWest RadioWorks 6
Other TV 4
Other Radio 4

By broadcaster, numbers of decisions are broadly proportionate to channel share and target audience.

Update on changes to the privacy principles

The BSA received nine submissions from the public on the discussion paper issued in August proposing changes to four of the Privacy Principles which are appended to the codes of broadcasting practice. A further consultation paper will be issued shortly.

Decision by Standard

2004/05

Balance, fairness, accuracy 110
Good taste and decency 34
Children’s Interests 22
Privacy 18
Designation/discrimination 18
Other 11
Violence 4

Decisions by Broadcaster

2004/05

TVNZ 131
CanWest TVWorks 28
The Radio Network 24
Radio NZ 13
CanWest RadioWorks 8
Other TV 6
Other Radio 4

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New Research Publication

Portrayal of Māori and te Ao Māori in Broadcasting: the foreshore and seabed issue

In December the BSA publishes the findings of a substantial research project about the portrayal of Māori and te Ao Māori in broadcasting. The report includes a literature review and detailed qualitative and quantitative analysis of some broadcast coverage of the foreshore and seabed issue during the period June to September 2005.

Background

One of the functions of the Authority under the Broadcasting Act 1989 is to conduct research and publish findings on matters relating to standards in broadcasting. In late 2003 the Authority sought proposals from several tertiary institutions for an independent analysis of broadcast media portrayals of Māori and the foreshore and seabed issue.

In early 2004 the Authority commissioned Te Kawa a Māori Studies, of Victoria University of Wellington to undertake the research. Te Kawa a Māori selected the issue of the foreshore and seabed given its topicality and the range of views being expressed.

Key Findings

The literature review notes that embedded news values and conventions sit uneasily with a Māori worldview. The literature review also notes that the correct pronunciation of Māori is well documented and condemned in both academic and popular literature. Alongside the welcome development of Māori media in the mainstream, the literature review notes that the correct pronunciation of Māori words and names is especially important.

Further, non-Māori news workers need education and training about Māori and te Ao Māori. Negative portrayals and stereotyping of Māori are documented and condemned in both academic and popular literature. Alongside the welcome development of Māori media in the mainstream, changes are needed in the mainstream. The literature review also notes that the correct pronunciation of Māori words and names is especially important.

For the qualitative aspect of the study, three of the groups of broadcast media and current affairs programmes were analysed: mainstream television (2 hours, 2 minutes); television by Māori for Māori (4 hours, 24 minutes); and national public radio (5 hours, 10 minutes). In total, 10 hours, 36 minutes of broadcast items were reviewed.

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The study could not have been undertaken without the goodwill and cooperation of Radio NZ, Television New Zealand and CanWest TVWorks, who agreed to be subjects of the research and supplied tapes to the research team. Broadcasters’ openness and contribution to research like this serves to strengthen the trust their audiences place in them to provide citizens with a fair, balanced and accurate media.

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Following distribution of the report to key stakeholders and reference groups in December, copies will be available by contacting trish@bsa.govt.nz, or phoning the BSA on 04 382 9508. A PDF will be available on our website.
The BSA acknowledged the complainant’s concern that, in the current climate of anxiety about the sexual abuse of children, satirising such behaviour by a teacher was inappropriate. However, it is not the role of the BSA to limit those topics to which satire may be applied, as this would run the risk of unconstitutionally infringing the right to freedom of expression.

Decision ref: 2005-074

Good taste and decency – 60 Minutes

An item on 60 Minutes, broadcast on TV3, explored a possible link between the high rate of Māori offending and the way in which male aggression may be related to Māori identity, particularly through the haka. The complaint alleged that the item was unethical, and especially unfair, as it made no effort to look at the positive aspects of Māori culture. No efforts were made, he argued, to present an alternative view on the issues under discussion.

The BSA did not uphold the complaint. Regarding balance, it noted that the programme made it clear that it was advancing controversial views about an important social issue. The programme did not purport to be an overview of the debate about Māori offending, and it was clear that a range of other perspectives existed. The programme had commenced by acknowledging positive aspects of Māori culture. Furthermore, the BSA noted that the period of current interest in relation to this issue remained open for further discussion and debate.

Decision ref: 2005-009

Balance – 60 Minutes

The BSA concluded that the complaint had identified no specific inaccuracies in the programme, and that aspect was not upheld.

Decision ref: 2005-085

Children’s Interests – promotions in the news

The BSA acknowledged the complainant’s assertion that the Māori Party voted the same way as the Labour Party. The 불Standard 7 (Programme Classification) and Appendix 1 of the Free-to-Air Television Code of Broadcasting Practice. The present case concerned a broadcast prior to 1 July, and thus the earlier standards applied.

TV3 broadcast two PGR rated promos for the movie The Mummy Returns. The first was shown between 6 and 7pm during 3 News. The second was shown after 7pm, during 60 Minutes. The second broadcast was found not to be in breach. The PGR timeband commences at 7pm and, taking into account the mature target audience of 60 Minutes, the BSA found that the broadcaster had adequately considered the interests of child viewers in broadcasting the PGR promo at 7.36pm.

The BSA concluded that, by broadcasting a PGR-rated promo during the underlying G-time of the 6pm news hour, CanWest showed insufficient consideration of children’s interests and breached Standard 9. News programmes themselves are unclassified.

Decision ref: 2005-077

Different criteria for Programme Classification now apply. As of 1 July 2005, PGR-rated promos in the news hour that take sufficient account of children’s interests will not breach Standard 9 (Children’s Interests).

Importantly, Guidelines 7c of the Code states: “Where a promo screens in an unclassifiable host programme outside the 40 time (including news and current affairs), the promo must be classified G or PGR and broadcasters must pay particular regard to Standard 9 (Children’s Interests).”

Appeal

The appeal by Radio NZ of an order in the Ellis decision (2004-115) was heard in the High Court on 7 September. The Court found against Radio NZ and awarded costs to Mr Ellis and the BSA.

Full decisions can be found on the BSA’s website www.bsa.govt.nz